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POETICAL
WRITINGS

OF

LEW

WRIGGLESWORTH



Lewis John Wrigglesworth was born at Hull, Iowa, U.S.A., June 18th, 1882. He lived in Ontario, Canada - Minnesota and Eau Claire, Wisconsin before coming to Alberta, Canada to settle at Olds, in 1903. In 1905 he was married to Inez Power of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, U.S.A. In 1911 they moved to Didsbury where he farmed until 1948 when they retired to live in Calgary and where he died April 23rd, 1956. There were two sons - William and LaVerne; three daughters - Beth, Lila and Mary. Christmas Day 1955 Mr. and Mrs. Wrigglesworth celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with their children, their families and friends.

Because he loved to express himself in poetry, over the years, this book has been compiled by his wife and lovingly dedicated to his memory by her, their children and grandchildren.

62-11-30/1

Irish Mother

She's such a human, helpful soul—
This Irish mother of mine;
So unpretentious on the whole,
Yet dignified and fine,
Her hair has turned to silver-grey;
Her eyes, they're like no other,
And much they tell who know her
well—

God bless you, Irish mother!

Sure, quick of tongue, and wit she
be;

(The blarney too, I'd say!)

She's just the greatest pal to me,
And naught would I betray.
That doting love that holds me so—
Far more than friend or brother,
In Celtic pride we'll close abide—
Just you and I, old mother.

True daughter, thou, of Gaelic lore,
Begot of Erin's boast;
Like shamrock-wearing sons of yore
Drink we this fitting toast:
"Till Death's cruel, silent hand
shall strike,
Our mortal breaths to smother—
Then, here's to thee, our star you'll
be,
A guide to us — a mother!"

Prairie Wool Poet

Of all the men beneath the skies
There's one I most of all despise.
When he should be out making hay
He monkeys round the place all
day,
A-looking wise and chewing snuff
While thinking up some crazy stuff.
His smock is quite beyond repair;
There's chaff and thistle in his hair;
His whiskers are a sight to see—
Much like a rat's nest you'll agree.
The buttons from his shirt are gone;
His socks—he hasn't any on!

Give me a rope slung o'er a limb
And soon I'd rid the world of him.
I'd put him where such wops as he
Would find congenial company.
There he and "Nick" could write a
"pome"
Entitled "Woman rules the home."
Or, "How to make them leghorns
lay";
Or, "Make the darned old home-
stead pay."
Then, just by way of killing time
Create some red-hot mushy rhyme
And swap it for some useless pelf.
Perhaps—well, try it once yourself!

Isolation

From fence to fence, in billow'd
drifts
The snow lies deep and high;
A silent loveliness and white,
The roadway greets the eye.
No scene more beauteous could rise
Nor picture flawless be—
Unbroken solitude that moves
To solemn reverie.
Yet something sadly seems amiss,
And here again I sigh
For this: once more the friendly
roar
Of flivvers passing by.
Its absence now my rest destroys
As but in dreams I hear
The pulsing, rhythmic motor's
rhyme
So restful to the ear;
That fast-approaching, mystic
thrum—
Receding in the night—
Assurance for the lonely soul
That all goes well and right.
But now that winters' on the wane
Anon some day, at last
I'll hear once more the welcome
roar
Of flivvers going past!

Mutual Frigidity

"Cold, isn't it?" the grocer sighed
While charging up my butter;
"Cold, isn't it?" quoth butcher
Brown,
And turned to start his cutter.
"Cold, isn't it?" a cop averred
With something like a shiver;
"Cold, isn't it?" a neighbor yelled,
Just passing in his flivver.
And everyone that winter's day
A-down the avenue,
The same sad fact their lips pro-
claimed;
They all opined 'twas true.

Straight homeward then my course
I ran,
All molars on the chatter;
Through every vein icicles clink
In tune to rough-shod clatter.
"Oh, swiftly speed the warming
flame,
The chilling wrath to vanquish!
Bites deep the heart its frosty fang,
That same be stilled with
anguish.
A lemon toddy hot I crave;
In fury wrap I'd 'fold me—
Most beastly cold it sure must be
Since everybody's told me!"

My Neighbors

To smooth along life's rugged way;
To ease the pain of sordid cares,
They lend a helpful hand each day.
My grievances are also theirs.
Comes loathsome illness, death or
grief;

Do I of prestige suffer loss,
From persecution beg relief
Or weary grow 'neath any cross,
A boon they be in dire distress,
These souls of cheery blessedness.

Not I would deign to estimate
A recompense in vulgar fee
Nor yet pretend to here relate
One-half the joy they mean to
me.
To thus assert, this trivial verse,
'Twould sadly prove inadequate—
A volume such of deeds, rehearse,
Wherein doth glow immaculate
True fellowship 'twixt man and
man,
Recording angels only, can.

Loneliness

Whence comest thou nor goest
hence,
Grim peace destroyer, sombre,
dense?
What right, God-given, thine to be
The tortured soul's Gethsemane?
Offspring of Satan, out-cast too;
Disdaining heav'n's inviting blue;
Completing all, since time begun,
Of sorrow's havoc left undone;
Eschew it not, dour fiend of hell—
Too well, too well—I ken thee well!

What stealth of tread, insidious,
thine!
In contrast fair a shroud would
shine
Against thy sullen curst attire;
Thy spirit, chill, exudes no fire.
As, craving naught save solitude,
Condemning man's solicitude,
Lurk ye within, the heart to attune
Dost reckon thee e'en far-fetched
boon?

Away, begone! I raise the toast:
"Here's to thy end!"—Ah, reckless
boast!
E'enst while joy's gen'rous bowl I
quaff—
Hark, something 'kin to spectral
laugh;
Coils round, each hope dispelling
chain—
Enslaved withal, aye, thine again!

Spring Gift

While still with winter's parting
taunts

Our senses, numb, are cluttered,
From out the blue his lyric flaunts,
Down in our midst he's fluttered.

His twitt'rings speak of sunny skies,
Of birdies, trees and flowers;
Deep warbles he of hopes that rise
With spring's refreshing showers.

"Thrice welcome friend, again," we
say,

"Thy faith we're now professing
Thine optimistic view this day
On life is all-possessing.

Unstinted joy thy song shall give,
Whichever wind may'st blow it;
Full sweet the life thy choice to
live,
Thou never-die spring poet!"

The Last Lap

Folks hint that his memory's failin'
His steps' slowing up too, they
say;
His fast-dimming sight a pathetic
blight;

That soon he'll be slippin' away.
They figger his life's work is over—
He's totterin', fragile an' frail—
An' I reckon they're right, all the
signs 'r' in sight—
He's a hittin' the Sunset Trail.

But the trail, 'twon't ever be
lonely—

As it carries him upward and on
He'll linger in dreams where in
fancy it seems
Live scenes of the past and gone.
And those cherished long since
departed—

Comes ever their beckonin' hail;
So he can't go wrong as he toddles
along

A-hittin' the Sunset Trail.

He won't have a fret or a worry,
For his life has been helpful an'
true;

The dark skies he made throw a
pleasanter shade

In days when our comforts were
few.

So then at the last mile's ending
There'll be no remorseful wail—
No, his heart's not sad, the old
pioneers' glad

To be hittin' the Sunset Trail!

Where You Find 'Em

Her cattle roam the sage-land wide;
The ranch is hers, her old man
died;
Bequeathed her all his blood-earned
Jack.

Then for the Unknown Range
make track.

Tho' fair this damsel packs a gun
And pots the rough-necks, every
one;
Flirts too with danger just a bit;
The outlaw brone prefers to sit;
Come round-up time or branding,
then
Her skill at roping shames the
men.

Yet, strange withal, this super-miss
Sighs daily for a lover's kiss.
Nor ever yet her heart's been wood
by cow-hand wild or lovelorn
dude—
Still pining for a bird like you
To keep it palpitating true.

Where does she keep? That female
wow
Lies hid within this shack right
now!
Don't get excited — take a look —
You'll find her in yon story-book!

His Bit

He seemed I've got discouraged
An' tired batchin' too
Out on this lone bald prairie, when
The West was young and new.
Anyway he packed his turkey and
Hit out for parts unknown.
(Some say he took t'sailin' till
The briney claimed its own;
Others have it he's a-sleepin' where
The South Sea palm-trees wave;
Or on gory Legion battle-ground
They dug the wand'ers' grave).
"He'd a shiftless disposition,
Naught-so-e'er of good did he
For country or posterity—"
Hold! friend, I disagree.

What tho' his grave be foreign
Or his restless bones for aye
Drift beneath unsounded fathoms,
He'll ne'er be forgotten, nay;
For this homestead bleak, forsaken,
Guards a monument I see,
To that poor unloved one's
memory—
He put it there—a tree!

In Tribute

Dear old comrade, you have left us,
Dear old neighbor, kind and true;
And your going has bereft us
Of a friend we all well knew.

From the homeland o'er the ocean,
Years ago you journeyed here,
And spared not your devotion
To the calling you held dear.

Often tho' the way was trying—
Hard at times to get along—
Never once was heard your sighing,
Always cheerful came your song.

Then the grim and silent reaper
Loomed upon our vision clear;
Deep our love, still growing deeper,
Though we shed no pitying tear.

Well we knew your cares were
over—
Happy, like a child again;
No more yours to grieve or suffer
Earthly misery or pain.

Soon again, all fears beguiling,
In a brighter, better land—
Soon again we'll see you smiling,
Once again we'll press your hand!

Strange, Wasn't It?

I can't see what's the matter, Doc,
I wonder could ye tell;
Shes' ben a-actin' queer of late,
Jest' listless-like ap'—Well

Don't seem ter take no interest
In anythin' we say
But folds her hands and sorta stares
All thro' the doggone day."

The doctor did not hesitate;
"My man, I must come clear;
Your faithful mate is threatened
with
Insanity I fear."

"In-san-i-t-y?" — old Perkins—
Slowly rubbed his puzzled crock;
"I shore do hate t'disagree
But yore mistaken, Doc.

Nigh fifteen year without a break
She's been right thar t'home;
She's had no chance to get exposed.
Insanity—how come?

We never have no visitors
Ner to the neighbors go—
How could she ketch that darn
disease.
Now I'd jest like ter know!"

The Grown-Up

O, Mary, little Mary mine,
Why did you up and grow
To womanhood all in a day
And leave your daddy so?

The earth has slipt its charm,
dearie,
In heav'n has died a star,
Since you, my sweet, adoring still,
I rev'rence from afar.

I miss your sparkling dimpled
smile;
Sly glances, mischief sown,
And baby arms' fond pressure too
Thrill now in dreams alone.

Bereft of gladnesses that were,
My heart's grown old and still
Save for a crying emptiness
Your nearness once could fill

But time has rolled between, love—
Right heavily it's lain—
Ah, that you were, dear Mary
mine,
A care-free child again!

And How!

"Lord, we'll miss him," sobbed his
loved ones—
After he'd been laid to rest—
And they lingered at the grave-side,
In their special Sunday-best.

And with tears like rills a-trickling,
Loud their wail to heaven soars:
"Lord, we're going to miss the old
boy
When comes time to do the
chores!"

So Be It

Not flesh-begot, blest boon to earth
Tho' kin with flesh we dwell;
Could'st carnal heart award thee
birth?—
God's will be it to tell.

Not ours to reck' the source whence
flow
Thy virtues, prestige-free;
We simply feel, we only know
A mutual trust that be:

A thraldom sweet our lives to hold—
Thy chain, forged leagues above
In pure immortal links of gold—
O, friendship, thou are love!

They Too

Out there in the world where
nobody cares,
When hope could seem but nil;
'Mid fallen ideals, unanswered
prayers,
I can see him struggling still.

All-pitiless too the crowds, that
sneer
As, busily hurrying by,
They voice no hurrah, they never a
cheer
For the sad, unfortunate guy.

Their smiles are alone for the op-
posite kind,
To such are their laurels flung—
The strong that've 'distanced' the
weaklings behind
To the sound of hosannas sung.

But not for the silent pathetic soul
Who, weak and oppressed, alone
Fought gamely forward but missed
his goal—
The fault was none of his own.

How prone we too his kin to shun
As, harrassed by fate and tossed,
In vain did labor the race to run,
These men who strove but lost.

All honor then, the stalwart few
Who 'gainst great odds prevailed;
Nor yet belittle—they're worthy
too—
The lads who've tried but failed.

The Bright Spot

No curtain eased the windows'
glare,
No picture adorned the wall;
Confused disorder everywhere—
A frontier shack as I recall.

So typical far in the West,
Where joy and comfort seldom
come;

Devoid of woman's presence blest—
A rude excuse to call a home.

Yet there amid surroundings raw,
The lonely place to cheer as tho',
Lo, on the dusty ledge I saw
A red geranium in blow!

What mystic impulse from the past,
Ere came the pioneering call,
Didst propagote such mad contrast,
I own I dared not guess at all.

But quick in my heart there stirred
A something, long forgotten too;
And tho' its petals voiced no word,
That flow'r a message spoke, I
knew!

Contentment

He tried the mansion on the hill,
The castle by the sea;
Searched next a prince's palace fair;
Nor whit the wiser he..
Proved false the gilded dens of sin;
The halls where sirens sing—
A transient pastime only, they,
No respite do they bring.
Throughout the earth from end to end
Till soul a-nigh despond;
Still, phantom-like, that which he craves
Lies always just beyond.
But whilst in quest of gem so rare
He constantly did roam,
Unnoticed, passed its dwelling-place—
A humble thatch called "home"!

Reflections

I wandered o'er the house today
And in each mem'ry haunted room,
Reminders of an epoch gay,
Found mingled there with present gloom.

The ancient, crackling, papered wall;
A picture high above a door;
An oldclothes-rack, decrepit, tall;
The sunlight slanting 'cross the floor.

Whilst in the attic overhead
Some childish relics lay in view;
A one-eyed doll; a broken sled;
A dog-eared score of schoolbooks, too.

And so in meditation's pow'r
I mused about the place awhile;
Resolving in that granted hour
With sordid fate to reconcile.

I pondered o'er the mysteries,
The workings of a Hand Unseen;
Life's disappointments, tragedies—
The joys, alas, that might have been.

Thus did my life (or so it seemed)
And this old structure fraternize;
Around one past we lived and dreamed
Shared each alike its vagaries.

Then swiftly cruel it came to me,
Like stealthy stab from sorrow's dart,
That empty tho' a house might be,
True loneliness lives in the heart!

Must Be

Just mem'ry now, that bygone day,
(Alas, that it should be!)
When toil I recked as 'kin to play
And strife a pleasantry.

Then birds and flowers flirted gay;
Ah, then, I know not why,
The joy-bells clanged in gladsome lay—
All heaven's blue the sky.

Somehow the skies have lost their blue,
The birds refuse to sing; ;
The flowers have donned a sombre hue;
I miss the joy-bells' ring.

Gone all ambition's 'slaving dreams—
Those phantom castles high—
From that dread spectre, work, it seems
I'm real inclined to shy.

No longer charged with pep and go,
Content am I at last
To let the youngsters swing the show,
And watch the world go past.

My step once spright is rated slow;
It irks me now to roam;
And ills so foreign years ago
In me have made their home.

But, when those Artic play-boys start—
Br-r-r, how I feel the cold!
You don't suppose—nix, have a heart—
Don't say I'm getting old!

Better Still

Out in my grove a robin sings —
The season's pioneer —
In tones of soulful ecstasy,
His song I joy to hear.

It sweetens winter's memory;
It smacks of rippling rill,
Of nodding daisies, azure skies —
Ah yes, 'tis well—but still

The thing that tickles me the most
Is not yon tuneful loafer;
You'd never guess—I'll tell you —
it's
The very first spring gopher.

One More

There's one more sound in a sacred nook,
And tenderly, soft white snow
A mantle has spread
O'er the slumb'ring dead
Where in summer the roses blow;
Where memories bring
On Magical wing
Sweet breaths of a long ago;
And oft is one stirred
The heart-spoken word
Down, deep in the breast to know.

There's one more soul up in Paradise,
And lo, in the west afar,
The lone way to cheer
As we journey here,
A bright, new glittering star.
Our course, true, to hold
It beckoneth bold,
This symbol of faith so given;
Till, bidding good-bye
To world and sky,
We stand at the portals of heaven.

As. Others See Us

When the song has gone out of
your heart, my boy,
And life throws an indigo hue;
When gall-bitter now, recollections
return,
A gnawing your heartstrings in
two;

When nothing whatever to giggle
about
You swear on this orb you can
find—
Just shoot a game squint at the old
looking-glass
And you'll probably alter your
mind.

What now! Is it really the facts I
behold?
Ho ho! What a picture it be —
A man grown, strutting a spoiled
baby's pout,
And face long, sufficient for three.
O miracle wonders! You'll banish
the groan
And jiggle with mirth I well
know;
While out of that speaker patheti-
cally grim
Like magic a smiler will grow.
And the old looking glass, it will
tackle your bluff,

A-swapping you grin for grin;
Till just what the dickens you'll
wonder occurred
So grouchy the day to begin.
For the old looking glass is an hon-
est good sport
That neither will flatter nor fake,
But straight truths deliver in
quantities right
To those who the lessons will
take.

Why, Of Course

There'll always be a Canada—
While men are honor-born;
With a yearn for pressing forward
In the scowls of jealous scorn.

There'll always be a Canada—
The name will always stand
For a place that grows no weak-
lings,
And whose people love their land.

Poor dear Hitler—hear him scream-
ing
That old Englands' day is done;
With her colonies to follow
In the blitzkrieg of the Hun.

So let us up and show him that,
Long after he is through,
There still will be a Canada—
Or does it know it too?

Nurse! Nurse!

"There's nothing so bad but it
might be worse"—for which some
are thankful and some the reverse;
tho' others will label my wit as
perverse, that saying holds true till
we ride with the hearse. Full many
there be, who, when times are ad-
verse, when sorrow comes flowing
their joy to immerse—right quick
are they beefing in adjectives terse
they rag and discredit the whole
universe.

To such would I speech: "If this
globe you'd traverse on a satisfied
grin and corpulent purse, with hard
work and honest each day you'll
rehearse; for a song and a laugh
shed the growl and the curse. Soon
then Lady Fortune and you will
converse, since effort so fashioned
will faith reimburse! Then thank
the good Lord that, outside of this
verse, there's nothing so bad it
might be worse."

The Return

While still with winter's parting taunts

Our senses, numb, are cluttered,
From out the blue his lyric flaunts—

Down in our midst he's fluttered.
His twitt'nings speak of sunny skies,
Of birdies, trees and flowers;
Deep warbles he of hopes that rise
With spring's refreshing showers.

"Thrice welcome friend, again," we say,

"Thy faith we're now professing;
Thine optimistic view this day
On life is all-possessing.
Unstinted joy thy song shall give,
Whichever wind mayst blow it;
Full sweet the life thy choice to live—

Thou never-die spring poet!"

The Boys of the R.A.F.

In peerless formation against the grey sky,
Nor ever a swerve to the right or the left;
Straight off to the land of the Nazis they fly—
Those dare-devil lads of the R.A.F.

Or zooming for enemy country and isle,
High over Old Mediterraneans' blue;
Deep-laden with death-dealing missiles the while—
"Tis there, with a vengeance, they're "doing things," too.

Then back in the homeland unceasing they roar—
A vigilant watch on the raiders they keep.
Till Fascist and Nazi stay safe from its shore,
The R.A.F. service will never know sleep.

O, God do thou help in this struggle for right,
And comfort the stricken, the tragic bereft,
And keep them, and double and treble their might—
The gallant, brave boys of our good R.A.F.!

The Abandoned Smithy

Pathetically, 'alone it stands,
A shrunken outcast, grey—
Akin to some old broken man—
Grim relic of a different day.
Its sagging roof and walls a-lean,
The idle swinging door—
Mute evidence of long disuse;
The mouldy, rotten floor
No longer creaks to tramp of steed,
Nor burst of flame we see
Light up the blackened, crumbling forge:

The smith—Oh where is he?
Why now is stilled the anvil's ring,
The bellows' purr and sigh,
That helped his livelihood to gain
In happier years gone by?
No more the shapely shoe he turns—
But toils with modern tools of death,
Inhaling ghastly naphtha fumes
In lieu of charcoal's pungent breath.
"Make way for progress!" Hear the cry

That daily to our ears it borne.
To mock the equine's gentle neigh—
The raucous blare of motor's horn.
"Keep forging on, O restless Man!"
Thus, civilization's sentence hard,
While smith and smithy too pass on,
Fond romance back into discard!

Without

What is home without a mother?
Just like heaven without God,
Or like hell with Satan absent—
Everything goes on the prod.

What is man without a woman?
What's a ship without a sail?
Like a Scotchman without whiskey,
Or a shirt without a tail.

Could we eat without a stomach?
Could we drink without a neck?
Or when absolutely busted,
Could we then pay with a cheque?

But of all the knotty problems
This the worst appears to be;
How could the world exist
Without a clever nut like me?

Or Is It Too Late?

I pondered long the other day
On neighbor Jones, across the way.
"Twas less than twenty years ago,
That man the joys of life did know.
His step was spright, he'd pep
galore,

A bright-eyed wife and kiddies four.
They struggled hard, Jones and his
wife,
To give those kids a chance in life;
All got B.A. degrees somehow;
But what about those hopefuls
now?

In some cheap, dirty hash-cale
Both girls wash dishes by the day.
The boys—it quite surpasses grief—
Those husky sons are on relief;
The whilst their ageing mom and
sire,
(No help can they afford to hire)
With aching bodies, strive each day
To make the farm produce and pay.

Then like a stab it came to me:
"What tragic similarity!
We farmers all (God rest our
bones!)

Are much on par with poor old
Jones.
Our sons are gone, our daughters
too,
We hardly know just what to do.
While unemployment stalks the
land
We slave, with tired brain and
hand,
To feed the millions out of work
And thousands who prefer to shirk."
Lord grant the day we're not far hence.
When we'll revert to commonsense.
And keep our youngsters on the
farm;
Once more will country life en-
charm,
And this lop-sided world resume
Its long-lost equilibrium.
Thus, only thus can we attain
To righteous happiness again.

The Grave on the Trail

So desolate your grass-grown
mound appears,
As weirdly from the west long
shadows steal
Past you and one lone pal unmoved
by years—
The shattered relic of a wagon
wheel.

Could you but tell whence came the
urge for you—
The pressing origin of your
estate—
What might the tale reveal, we fain
would know?
Your long-dead occupant rise and
narrate.
The trials and vicissitudes
endured—
Could it thus speak, our ears I
reck' would hear
Of hardly souls to obstacles inured.
Whilst slow they trekked o'er
waste and desert drear.
Did thirst or hunger haste your
need to be?
(O heav'n forbid man e'er
shouldst suffer so!)
Or red-men wild, cavoring savage-
ly,
Strike here the heart of one ill-
spared to go?
Might be the bones of one with
toil-marked hands,
Or dimpled infant palm that
knew but play—
Spend unit of some bold heroic
band—
Lie rotting here in lonely secrecy?
Forsooth, we shall not know. Nor
can we tell
What impulse blind stirred all-
unseen the while,
And merciless through torture kin
to hell,
Spurred on those stoic hearts long
mile on mile.
Not ours to sigh in weak impotency;
Or view the sordid past through
sensless tears.
Be this our creed, to honor faith-
fully,
The spirit of our sturdy pioneers.
Who faltered not through hardship,
grief or pain;
Whose only recompense, assur-
ance true,
That from their toil might others
live and gain—
Thus fared they forth to conquer
realms anew.
Immortal land-mark record this our
vow,
And from thy silence grant us
grace to feel,
That steadfast from this hour we'll
be, as thou—
Abiding trust — thou too, old
wagon wheel!

Turner Valley

Off to the west, in grandeur rise
The foot-hilled snow-caps toward
the skies;
Here at our feet the oil-field lies;
In a staunch array its derricks
too
Like giant watchmen guarding
true

The Valley.

Long, countless years, so we are
told.

Lay waiting here the liquid gold;
Still unreleased by science bold;
Till God's creation, man, explored
Deep to those caverns treasure-
stored

Beneath the Valley.

The tragedies, unanswered pray-
ers;
The disappointments that were
theirs
Who pioneered this vale of flares—
Where now the soulful "gusher"
flows—
That we might benefit—who
knows—

But this old Valley?

Be true old friend nor fail us now;
Thy gas-fires' soft, far reaching
glow

Assurance vital seemth so.

Yon priceless aid in war or
peace—

Grant that its flow may never
cease

From thee, our Valley!

Homing Hour

Ah, here they come, I see them now!
The boys've got the lead;
The girls are staging quite a row
And whipping up their steed.

Till soon their faces close I view—
Gay Billie, laughing Jack
To Pinto cling while Bet and Sue
Hurrah from Sandys' back.

O'er hill and hollow, dip and rise,
So like in days of yore—
The apparition greets my eyes
Along 'bout half-past four.

Soon, too, the picture fades, it
seems,
Again I'm here alone;
The lads and lassies of my
dreams?—
They're men and women grown.

Still, year by year, this time o'day
I look off toward the school
And age-old longings flit away—
O Fancy, sweet and cruel.

Should I a hundred live to be,
This hour each day to come—
Across the fields you'd bring to me
The kiddies riding home!

The Alberta Excelsior

Depression's night had fallen fast,
When thro' a western province pas-
ed
A man who bore with ne'er a
change
A banner with this slogan strange—
"Dividends!"

His brow was bald; his eyes be-
neath,
Belligerent, flashed from its sheath;
While blatant, too, discordant rung
The accents of that well-known
tongue.

"Dividends!"

In sordid homes he saw the plight
Of pantries empty day and night;
The inmates clad in jute alone;
And from his lips escaped a groan,
"Dividends!"

"Beware!" the wise oldtimers said,
"That foolish bunk hath turned thy
head;
Forsoth thou'll fail tho' thick thy
hide."
Whereat that haughty voice replied,
"Dividends!"

"Pray have a care, your ardor
stint!"

Thus politicians' friendly hint;
Yet, still in boastful tones and loud,
He cried while reaching for a cloud,
"Dividends!"

At last with prestige turned to ice,
Entangled in his strange device—
Emblazoned emblem, staff and
all—
He trips and stumbles to his fall,
From dividends.

What ho, such ignominious slump!
The bottom meets him with a
bump;
Then, bending low, they heard him
say,
Ere with a sigh he swooned away.
"No dividends!"

Let's Try It!

You've had trouble with your neighbour;
Quite some fracas — had to quell it;
Hasten not to make it public—
Let the other fellow tell it.
Truer far will ring his version,
(He can tell it best you know,)
Be a chivalrous old topfer;
Give the other bird a show.

Comes a whispered local scandal;
Gee it's rich, whew! can't you smell it?
Don't attempt to do it justice—
Let the other woman tell it.
Ah! what rapture fills her being!
Note the joy-transfigured face
As exulting, she belittles
That poor soul just fell from grace.

Let the other fellow tell it—
That dark tale you doubt is true;
Nor begrudge to him the honor—
Let him tell that story too.
With all gossips on the rampage,
Best for you to hide away
And lock your talker in its stable—
That's the place for it today.

The Prairie Apple Tree

Transplanted from its infant rest,
'Mid orchard's leafy shade sub-lime,
A sapling vigorous it came
To brave a rugged western clime.
Deep-rooted, stoical it grew;
Begat with time and eye to bless—
Reward for courage might it seem—
This snowy, scented loveliness.

What makes, within, a longing stir—
The footsteps yearn to linger so,
As passing near one senses deep
A breath of old Ontario?
(Ah! does it not the strongest move,
When memories come winging back
Forgotten joys—alas, of which
Long trying years have known a lack!)

Symbolical of faith and trust—
The planting of this apple tree;
The planter, too—(in reverence bow
All homage due, his memory!)

Utopia

'Way off in the magic, mysterious West,
Where skies meet the horizon's kiss,
Lies a country I'd ever extol as the best—
A paradise lolling in bliss.

As oft do I journey, in fancy, alone,
When wearisome day has grown old,
To revel and bask in its happy ozone—
This region where jewels and gold

In reckless profusion lie scattered about,
Their glitter and sparkle to blend
With dew's teary lustre that never dies out,
And flowers deep perfume expend.

Those hills so all-verdant; the sun never sets
Past yon purple ranges, sublime;
The firmament's glory a rapture begets
So adapt in this glorious clime.

Its zephyrs no artic joy-killer can ride—
'Tis mid-summer always it seems—
Though ne'er can it be, I'd so love to reside
In that land I explore in my dreams.

The Good Old Days

The goodman swings his sickle low—
How clean the path he leaves!
While children nearby romp and play,
His good wife ties the sheaves.
In homely team-work thus is passed
Each morn and afternoon;
While lads and lasses pledge their loves
'Neath the big round harvest moon.

Ah! those were the days, the good old days—
The days of long ago;
When farmers lived (so we are told)
Apart from debt and woe.
Wives then were helpers too, they say,

Who loved to bake and sew;
Who knew the trick of wheel and
loom
And fed the home fires' glow.

"Return, return those days of yore,
Turn back the years!" we cry;
"Bring back the joys of former
scenes
Ere hearts within us die.
Lost pride of home do reinstate,
And potent happiness
Past generations well did know
Their simple lives to bless."

But progress, heedless, sets the pace,
New modern ways to find;
In mem'ry only, love lives on—
Its spell is left behind
As wantonly we hurry on;
While the hell that we have
known,
The dreamed-of "good old days"
will be
When boys to men have grown.

Retired

O'er acres broad where once in
youthful pride
He laid the mellow furrows row
on row,
A younger form than his shall
hence preside,
A modern generation reap and
sow.

Great barns wherein repose the kine
and steed;
The farmhouse wide and home-
stead shanty too,
All reckon in Fate's harsh and
treacherous creed—
A tear rolls down; he bids them
mute adieu.

He's done; tho' his alone by right-
eous might
Another's hands this domain will
attend;
As one condemned to live thro'
endless hight,
With loathing deep in soul he
waits the end.

The waiting car honks loudly from
the lane;
He steps within, is quickly borne
away;
No more the old free life to live
again—
Old age and city lights have won
the day!

Tit For Tat

Close by the sea, we loaf and rest—
My life-long pal and I;
The Joneses sniff, they know 'tis
best

In mountains near the sky.
Jones dandies up and cuts a dash—
My togs are now taboo;
Jones buys his mate a roadster
(Nash)—

Of course mine gets hers too.
Mine cops a head-piece—(what a
crack!)

His too—'a classy hat;
I rent a comfy, modern shack—
He grabs a swanky flat.

And so it goes; the whole year
through

We play the artful game—
My morale he would fain subdue,
On him I try the same.

Of late, a yearning grows apace—
(O, rest my tired bones!)
To cut this silly, hopeless race
I've staged with neighbor Jones.

My bills keep mounting day by
day—

To dwell on them I dread;
In place of being well away
I'm sadly in the red.

'My creditors are getting sore—
I fail to meet their loans
Since now I blow my all and more
To keep in step with Jones.

But still, it hands me quite some
kick

To note with certain glee,
That Jonesy has to buy on tick
To keep in step with me!

Old-fashioned

Just an old-fashioned buddy whos'
not saying much;

Plain honest without and within;
With an old-fashioned liking for
honor and such

And an old-fashioned loathing for
sin.

And old-fashioned, too, the smile
he hands you

While trudging life's wearisome
road.

And ever each day in the old-fash-
ioned way

Does he lighten some weaker
mans' load.

Alas, for this failing: he's nowhere
the gift

For piling up riches or making a shift

To gather where never he sowed.

"Away with the laggard!" in blus-
and age

And, "Down with his kind!" do
we hear;

"Our minutes are dollars, this epoch
and gae

Cannot harbor a sissy, 'tis clear
No place will he find for his slow-
thinking mind

Where speed and precision
abound;

Then, out of the way with this fel-
low we say,

Far better were he in the ground!"
Says the world, "Just a moment
(and slyly he winks);
Reconsider this case, that's the
laddie methinks
Who keeps all my wheels going
round!"

The Love Nest

Round by the willows 'neath the
hill,

Thro' leafy, shelf'ring popular too,
Up goes the winding lane until
A homely cabin comes in view.

And there when toilsome day is o'er
And sunset's rays no longer burn,
Lo, in the twilight by the door,
Someone awaits her mate's
return.

Oh, blissful tryst, that meeting
there;

Could earthly picture sweeter be,
Or city's dazzling pomp compare
With such sublime simplicity?

Would that those hearts might
never know

The ghastly pall of sorrow's night;
As hand in hand thro' life they go,
Could all their paths be joyous
bright.

O, blest retreat of joy untold,
Fail not your mission to perform;
Be yours to guard the love you hold,
Thro' summer calm and winter's
storm.

Long may your humble walls
resound

To blithesome, laughing gaiety;
And heavenly, sweet content
abound
Throughout your peaceful entity!

Unchangeable

A-nigh the sage's desert dwell, far
off its sham'ring rim,

A sheik drew up at ebb of day, as
fierce its light grew dim.

And redly burned the sun's last
heat on retine at hand

And jewelled trappings of the
mount that knelt at his command

Like one exuding inborn grace,
dark-eyed, the stranger strode,
A lofty peer as ne'er did stoop,
straight to the seer's abode.

"Why ent'rest thou this humble
thatch?" the aged magician
spoke;

"Crav'st of thy lowly slave to make
some heartless jest or joke?

My robes and bearing contrast thine
akin to night with day;

Be kind good sir to leave in peace
and go thy haughty way."

"Pray rest thy fears," the sheik
replied, "and too, thine honor
dear;

Far from a fool's delight to scorn
do I thus journey here.

'Neath heavy loot my camels trod;
my steeds outwing the wind;
My untouched hoards of gold, I
wean, would tax a counter's
mind.

My raiment, true out-dazzleth
thine; mein so unrivalled, grand;
All gaily-princessed harems mine,
the fair of ev'ry land.

Yet this thing lackest I, O' friend,
thou soul of magic art—

All that is mine give I now thee for
one contented heart!"

The wise-man frowned in quand'ry
deep; then shaked that snowy
head:

"Nay, nay my son, 'tis not for man
to so dispose," he said.

"The task be justly thine alone to
calm thy inward self;

Nor wouldst one deign to part from
thee thine ill-begotten pelf.

None other's will save thine must
strive—hark ye, whilst here we
part:

From heav'n to me no pow'r is giv'n
to change the nomad heart!"

Forth silent went the Arab then,
a monarch cursed to roam;

A scion rich yet pauper he—a prince
without a home!

Lumber Camp Reminiscences

Tier on tier within the shanty,
Since the lads their blankets
rolled,
Rise the bunks so bare and lonely—
Mutely evident of old.
When pine was in its element,
And virgin forest still
Unravished by the cleft of axe
And cross-cut's biting shrill.
Once throughout this empty
stillness
Echoed loud and boisterous
laugh;
Shook the floors to jig and break-
down,
Whilst the banter, wit and chaff
Make their round from boss to
fluñkie — .
From its corner without fail,
Thoughts of home and dear ones
bringing,
Comes the fiddles' soothing wail.
Where now those lusty rounders?
Scattered through the earth are
they;
Some the grave has duly taken,
Others passing to decay—
Soon to be, like this old shanty,
Minders only of the past;—
One-time virtue unavailing—
Ignominious, outcast.
"Dust to dust, to earth and ashes"
Fickle Fate decrees to all,
Be it frame of brawny stature,
Trusty roof or sturdy wall.
All is brevity uncertain;
Time demands that we remove;
Making way for newer epochs—
Infant lives the years to prove.

Fast Work

There dwelt a lonely bachelor
beside the Red Deer river. The
shades of night were falling fast,
and out of tune his liver. When
near his lowly shack he sat, in
sombre reverie, as was his wont at
close of day, beneath a jackpine
tree.

"This single life is hell", he
mused, "the loneliness, I fear, will
put me in the funny-house inside of
one short year. No kiddies prattle
at my knee; no wife adorns my
door. With filling up on tasteless
grub I'm sickened to the core. My

system's sadly on the blink, I'm all
but lost," sighed he, "and I don't
give a hoot for anyone else, since
nobody cares for me. O, for some
woman kind and good my humble
lot to share; to cook and sew some
buttons on and drive away despair".

"Hello, big boy!" a soft voice
spoke, so close it made him start.
And lo, a city flapper bold out angling
for a heart. So fabbergasted
was the guy, his feeble brain grew
dizzy; all quickly noted by the maid
who right at once got busy. A
fetching glance she flung his way,
he caught it on the chin, and took
the count right there and then, this
man of woe and sin.

The world by now had gone to
roost, up rose the pale love moon.
No better time, she rightly guessed,
to throw a luring "spoon". Her
"line" of cooey, flatt'ring speech,
how smoothly off she reeled, And
"bait"—two pursed-up scarlet lips
—no treacherous barb revealed. She
teased him round a time or two,
when (sad here to relate) discretion
lightly cast aside, he nibbled at the
"bait". Then swallowed hook and
"line" as well—alas, that fatal
"spoon"—just one more sucker
joined her string of boobs that bit
too soon!

Home

On Alpine summit's breezy crest;
In Congo jungle grand;
Where English rills induce to rest,
I long some day to stand.
And too, awhile, how swell to be
Where Egypt's Nile flows tran-
quilly
Thro' endless desert sand.

What ecstasy, in life real,
To sail the ocean wide;
The trade winds' fascination feel
On many a foreign tide!
From strand to strand, all purpose-
free;
A salt sea-hand, and gallantly
My trusty ship to ride.

Ah, yes, a boon so great I know—
Twould scatter gloom and fear—
Just every place on earth to go
And ramble far and near.
Yet, comes the thought, where'er
it be
The way was wrought, quite nor-
mally
In dreams I'd still be here!

Cinema Vagaries

What a classy rare hero the cow-puncher is—

In the movies

To shoot and to ride are considered his biz—

In the movies.

His pants are of leather, his shirt is all-silk;

He's chummy with liquor, a stranger to milk—

It's "red-eye" or nothing for him and his ilk—

In the movies.

This bird from his enemies never takes lip—

In the movies.

So fast on the draw and he works from the hip—

In the movies.

Fights many a battle, the pictures will tell;

Each villian he starts on a journey to hell;

Gets peppered himself, but of course He gets well—

In the movies!

But

He doesn't wear overalls, sweater or smock—

In the movies!

Nor a derelict greasy old cap on his crock—

In the movies.

On a mad fighting bronc you'll not see him show fright;

Nor sipping soft drinks to avoid getting tight,

Like it's done in real life—it just wouldn't look right

In the movies!

And

They dont' have him forking manure (what a laugh)

In the movies.

Nor trying to hand-feed a hard-boiled range calf—

In the movies.

And he's never shown swearing at putting up hay;

Or out in the tater-patch toiling all day—

No, not on your life—they dont' do it that way

In the movies!

Here's then to the pictures, hurrah for them too—

So grand for the soul when the world's feeling blue.

Of course they're just phoney, but listen—that's right,

Throw on the glad-rags, we'll go see 'em tonite!

The Pioneer School House

Near by the grass-grown trail, a-dream,

A derelict in somber hue,

(True vagabond, unloved, to seem)
You sleep the long, long seasons through.

Your tattered blinds, no longer drawn;

The weathered clapboards loosely cling:

Your chimney wracked and crumbling down.

And silent too your belfry's ring.

Where now those blithesome, joyous hearts

That gathered here in days of yore?

A myriad thoughts that query starts,
For some are here and some no more.

A score they marched at country's call,

That through your portals went and came.

And some that strove did blameless fall
While others rose to heights of fame.

And two have found a rest the while

Beneath some oceans' lonely wave.

And one, so loved — on pagan isle
She drew a nameless, martyr's grave.

Ah, strange, and yet (the thought grows dear)

How many scattered o'er the earth,

In you, old relic, brown and drear,
Made known their infant yearnings' birth.

But now you slumber here alone,
Tho' time will end your dreams at last,

Like human kin whose work is done.

Still lingers on amid the past.

More never may your walls resound
To scholar's drone or gaiety

While memories that here abound
Endear your peaceful sanctity.

Find the Moral.

A wild roving lad wand'ring back
to his home,
With secret resolvings more never
to roam;
I spied thro' the window my dear
mother fair,
Rocking alone in her old rocking
chair.

No fond, waiting parent I see to
surprise
In this up-to-date female now
blasting my eyes;
So hard to believe as in wonder I
stare,
Rocking alone in her old rocking
chair!

Her hair's in a "curly-cut," altered
its hue;
She's holding a book and a cigar-
ette, too;
The book's not a Bible, one thing I
would swear,
Rocking alone in her old rocking
chair!

There's lipstick and rouge on that
saintly old face;
So shiny her gown that it seems
out of place;
French heels on her feet and her
shins are all bare,
Rocking alone in her old rocking
chair!

Oh, was I disgusted, dismayed and
chagrined?
I renounced all remorse for the sins
I had sinned;
Turned back to my rambles and
left her, still there,
Rocking alone in her old rocking
chair!

Do You Remember

When the West was in its youth,
Sal,
And the prairie stretched away,
A virtual robe, to the foothills'
home,
And fellowship ruled the day;
And the worn old trail that wound
its way
To the door of your welcome
home,
Where the young folks gathered
their songs to sing
In the deepening twilight's gloam;

And the pioneers too—those hearts
of gold,
Whose ardor no hardships could
stem;
Whose lives a conqueror's soul re-
vealed—
'Tis well you remember them.
But the young folks now are old,
Sal;
The pioneer's day is done;
In lieu of trail's enchanting wind
Roll the dusty highways on.
And the song lies dead in the heart,
Sal;
The pitiless harrow and plow
A garden of greed for grasping
minds
Have made of the prairies now.
And since for these myriad soulless
fields
We bartered the clean, free sod,
To paltry ideals we've closer drawn,
And farther away from God.

The Diehards

The dogies they are down again,
The cattle market's bad;
Its handed us a dirty slap—
We've lost our shirts, bedad!
Now we'll default on interest,
On principal and tax;
This time we got it proper where
The chicken got the axe.
For the packers have the cattle
And the shippers have the mun;
And we? Oh, us poor devils—we're
Supposed to have the fun!
Yes, the buyer hogs the profits
when
He bills 'em down by rail;
And the packer swipes the carcass,
while
The farmer holds the tail.
And he ponders as he figures up
His winnings, for instead,
Always comes the same old
answer—
A balance—IN THE RED.
And so it goes, and year by year
The game gets worse and worse;
This beef-producing we deplore,
All "critters" how we curse!
But hold; we're some unbeaten
still—
We'll raise a crop of grain,
Round up them yearlin's in the fall
AND TRY 'ER ONCE AGAIN!

Christmas Story

In quandary deep Old Santa mused;
(Now this was years ago)
The midnight hour nigh at hand
While burned the candle low.

"I've presents here for big and
small—
For every lass and lad
And mother too; but nought," sigh-
ed he
"Have I for dear old dad."

"The story-book I'll give to Bess—
She sits within all day—
Those skates will tickle sturdy Jack;
The razor goes to Jay.

"That sled I've tagged for little Tim,
For Peggy there's a doll;
While Sadie cops this ribbon blue
And Mumsie wins the shawl.

"But father, I just plumb forgot,
And ne'er a blessed scrap
Of anything I see to make
A gift for you, old chap!"

His eye went roving round the den,
In desperation so,
Till, dangling on a nail, it spied
A strip of calico.

"Hooray!" the old rogue cried in
glee—

"We're saved at last I trow;
But burn my whiskers, for a name
It's stumped I am right now!"

"Ho, ho! 'tis sure a futiny rag—
A gaudy, useless thing;
Too flimsy for a neckerchief,
Too bulky for a string!"

"It's something anyway," quoth he,
And grinned a sheepish grin;
Then, conscience sadly off its guard,
He shoved the darned thing in
His pack and hied him on his way.

So that, my dears, is why
Each year when Christmas rolls
around,
The old boy draws a tie!

Disqualified

We warned you not to try it, Bill—
You never should have gone
Off to that blamed stampede to ride
That bronc "Saskatchewan."

We told you he was ornery,
We knew this bird was tough—
A skinful just of nasty tricks,
But you lacked brains enough

To view the shindig from the fence
And leave his nibs alone—
(Why monkey 'round your neigh-
bor's nag

When you can't ride your own?)

But no, you figgered we were dumb,
Plain ignorant and dense;
And staged one gosh-all-fired-row
To prove we had no sense.

You'd razz that bum to hell and
back

And never once claw leather;
Bust wide his carcass, trim his hide
And knot his limbs together.

Of course we were some skeptical—
We'd seen you ride before—
But didn't say an awful lot
For fear you might get sore.

And sure enough, he piled you—
what!

You had no honest chance?—
He hoisted you nigh to the stars
Then kicked you in the pants.

Then demon-like, on your return,
The act he did repeat
And left you gasping front-side up—
Calamitous defeat!

We reckon you'll reform, Bill,
Now that you've had your "fling";
And tuck right in and do your best
To help like everything.

Nor evermore yon, treach'rous hunk
Of mustang you'll bestride—
A splurge in that swell Buick now
Might soothe your injured pride'

Rural Anxiety

No word you spoke at parting-
time;

Soft were your eyes of brown
As silken-clad the path sublime
You took and started down.

Nor turned to bid a last good-bye;
For me you scorned a care;
But slowly faded from my eye
And left me standing there.

Return, my gentle one, return!
Ere light and darkness meet;
Beside the gate I stand and yearn
Your presence here to greet.

Oh, Joy! at last your voice I hear,
Nor did I wait in vain—
Come, hustle up, you lazy dear,
It's milking time again!

Still Working

Silent, obscure, ere the dawn is awaking;
Potent, defiant, whatever come may;
Their moorings they've slipped and are seaward a-making—
The swift-gliding sea-hawks are off on their way!

Soon, out in the blackness, they'll contact the cargoes;
Swing into formation then forward they'll go;
Scorning the customs' red tape or embargoes
Theirs but to sail watchful and deal with the foe.

Little they reck the grave perils abiding.
As vigilant ever their trust bears them on—
Thro' waters where steel-coated sharks lurk in hiding;
Or ocean, mine-sprinkled, their courses be run.

Staunch be the hearties that man the grey vessels—
Humbly, unsung, do they proffer their aid;
Foiling the Nazi as vainly he wrestles
To break the raw curse of a British blockade.

Long may the Navy take pride in its service;
And long may its mothers be proud of their boys;
Nor ever a tempter from duty to swerve us,
Or weaken our faith in our gallant convoys!

The Old Cow Camp

Still, half-way up the coulee's bank
The dear old bunk-house stands—
Its bottom logs decayed and sank—
As one with folded hands.

Sits dreaming back on other days
When cattle roamed at will,
Where once the choice was theirs to graze
And men now reap and till.

Its roof of sods is now no more;
The walls so racked and low,
Bespeak a dim-remembered lore
Of many years ago.

Yet oft it seems those erring boys
I knew when this was home
Slip out from worldly strife and noise

And thro' the twilight roam.

And once again we gather here,
Again our spirits meet;
I view their faces wistful, near
As fancy reigns complete.

What takes me 'crost the prairie's swell,
Back to the years gone by;
With modern comforts striving well
The heart to satisfy?

Why here, 'midst gentler ways and laws,
I crave the long ago?
Perhaps—who knows?—it's just because
I'm far less care-free now!

On to Quebec!

They're off for a ride, we're a-loadin' 'em now
So the choo-choo can rush them along
The land of the ox-cart, the seven-inch plow,
The habitant, fiddle and song.

Oh, sadly they'll long for their old grassy range,
The round-up and cow-punchers' cuss;
In view of such tragic and radical change
There's likely to be quite a fuss.

There's old "Pinto John" with his shiny-blue eyes—
Bein'! Oui, oui, M'sieu'. Mon Dieu!
The Frenchy who coppers this bronc
for a prize
Blows hisself for a beautiful stew.

And Tony and Spike, they've just
threw me a hunch
They're à-plannin' to go a bit rough;
While Roany and Pete and the rest
of the bunch
Like Le Diable himself, they are tough.

O, east is east and west is west
And soon shall the twain of them meet;
Then out of the fray will emerge
which is best
On his two (or maybe four) feet.

It's Down Again!

Hi! neighbor, did you hear the news that's going round the town?

The market took a slump to-day and butter-fat is down.

There's none the motive can explain, we're all so dumb and dense;

It's happened just the same, bigosh, and cream is off two cents!

Our merchants soon the truth will learn, their stocks they'll rearrange,

And in the line-up on their shelves you'll note a drastic change.

Instead of silks and laces, now they'll sell 'em calico;

And cotton bloomers in the place of rayon panties, too.

The churches too will feel the pinch as sure as cats are born, And I've a hunch that in the plate this coming Sabbath morn

No welcome quarters clatter, there'll be nickels, dimes and pence. Oh Lordy, what a difference since cream slid off two cents!

There's nary one that suffers not when thro' this bloomin' town The dismal fact is spread abroad that "fat" is tumbling down.

And not a woman, man nor child but knows what's bound to come

When the farmer takes a wage-cut and the world goes on the bum.

"Quit harping for that coat, my dear and sure that hat will do Another year, remember what hard times we're coming to;

And Sis, forget that frock as well, come, come, now don't be vain! Go easy on the butter, Bud. 'cause cream is down again!"

Let other nations wrestle with their treasures, trades and wars; Afflictions, grievous too, have we, though strangers to old Mars

And tho' from violence we shrink, the feeling grows intense; And say, DO we just yelp and cuss when cream slips down two cents!

If Only!

A lucky boy old Adam was—
Just born that way I guess;
No need for him to fuss because
His wife was hard to dress.

He didn't have to read the news
Or sit a movie through;
Nor stand some fool announcer's
views

The way we hombres do.

Sure, tranquil he could rest and snore

And not a worry know,
Nor put his nose outside the door
In forty-six below.

But bliss like this could not long be;
A serpent staged his fall;
Eve swiped the fruit from off The Tree—
He downed it core and all.

And ever since that fateful day—
The day poor Adam fell—
It's been the farmer's lot to pay
His debt to heav'n and hell.

The curse to them was handed down
To sow and reap and plow,
The whilst they murmur, fret and frown
Till moisture rides the brow.

Now, had I been her husband there,
When Eve that apple plucked,
To tempt me out of home, I swear
Right then I should have bucked.

I'd say, "Go you and leave me here,
For future mankind's sake;
This place looks swell, I'll keep it, dear,
And you can have the snake!"

The Walker

To A. B. Austin, author of "In Your Stride."

Ho! for the life of a walker—
Not the hitch-hiking kind we all know,
Who tramps a wee mile, then "thumbs" in his style
For someone to give a ride—
But that vigorous, red-blooded human,

The weather-browned, stoical lad
Who roars out a song as, swinging along,

He carries the world in his stride.
Not him for the easy-chair parlour
He scoffs at the soft-cushioned
ear;
He rambles and sees in flowers and
trees
The Creators' ascendancy wide.
No mountain too craggy or rugged—
In swift broiling burn there's a
thrill;
To loiter he's sure by deep-heathered
moor,
This robust he-man in his stride.
Ho! then for the wide-open spaces;
To the bold, ardent strider —
"here's how!"—
Who prizes good health ~~as~~ a storage
of wealth,
Whose hard-muscled limbs are
his pride.
Ay, drink to his health everybody,
And God-speed his way with a
cheer—
This man who, alone, searches out
the unknown,
Each day in the length of his
stride!

More Practical

The armchair poet racks his brain
to get the proper slant;
While boasting for the simple life;
Oh my! How does he rant.
Of frisky lambkins blithe and
gay
And milkmaids flirting on their
way
And that old gag re new-mown
hay
Quite oft you'll hear him chant.
With eulogizing birds and flowers
his pen will sometimes warm,
But never a word the world has
heard 'bout chore-time on the
farm.

You mushy, sentimental runt; come
here and take a peek
At what takes place on any farm
just fourteen times a week.
And then I ween, in language
terse
You'll flay your one-time style
of verse
And say "Good night" or some-
thing worse
In accents not so meek.
Right well I know that you'll agree
'twon't do a bit of harm
To change your tune, a song to
croon of chore-time on the farm.

"Tis seven p.m. The cows are in—
the farmer grabs a pail;
His husky partner follows suit. (No
milkmaid sweet and frail).
From nineteen cows the milk
they strip;
So close the air, with sweat
they drip;
Take from this boy a quiet tip-
It's pleasanter in jail.
The kiddies turn and separate - Oh,
life with all its charm.
Not half the time is set to rhyme
with chore-time on the farm.

"Oh Muvver! Muvver, help me
quick!" we hear a youngster
roar,
Whose pants have buttoned on a
nail and hanged him to a door.
Old Rover's playing skin-the-
cat;
She breaks away - Good hea-
en's, scat!
Clear out of here, you pesky
brat.
The Old Man's getting sore,
With malediction fouls the air; but
don't you take alarm.
That sort of play comes on each
day at chore-time on the farm.

Those playful lambs we read about
they sure are raising Cain;
Right through that old board fence
they've gone into the field of
grain.
The calves are thirsty I can
tell;
Wee-e-e-e, oink! - the pigs are
mad as — well
They must be fed to stop their
yell
Lest we become insane.
The chickens! hurry, bring 'em in,
for look, here comes a storm!
But goodness me! things lively be
at chore-time on the farm.

Sing not to me of city ways; of
splendor, pomp and frills.
Give me the country every time -
that's where you get your thrills.
Society with all its bunk
Appeals to me like so much
junk;
But life is full of pep and spunk
Out here among the hills;
Where men are men, as sayings go;
and brown and strong of arm,
And things move fast from first to
last, at chore-time on the farm.

Next Year

(A FARMER'S DREAM)

"Next year," the weather prophets say, "will be all we desire;
And bumper crops we're sure to reap, if well the soil we till."
('Tis twilight time, as pipe aglow, he settles by the fire;
And with the smoke his spirits rise, while all around grows still.)

"Next year the sun and rain combined will furnish what we need
To make all vegetation thrive and yield profusely too
'Twill cause the grass to luscious grow, and propagate our seed
A hundred-fold. Oh! Glad we'll be to have it all come true.

The cattle on the verdant hills a-growing fat will be;
The wheat put up a record, fit to make a fellow cheer;
And naught but optimism gay shall anyone e're see.
Methinks more bins I'll need to build at threshing time next year.

Next year, so politicians say, we'll all see better times.
And produce prices will advance so we can take our ease
And with our wives and families resort to warmer climes—
There to escape the wintry blasts 'neath orange-laden trees.

Oh! Sure I'll pay the mortgage off—a trifling thing to do.
I'll paint the buildings, fix the house and buy a brand new car.
That note against me at the bank, I'll lift and tear in two—
A single blot must not remain our happiness to mar.

Like heaven itself this earth will be when all this comes to pass;
And I can say goodbye to care (the time seems drawing near!)
No fear of bleak despondency—no black and deep morass.
Oh! Happy I can rest . . . and . . . rest—Next year . . . Next year!

The pipe slips from a nerveless grasp; a snowy pallor creeps Into the leahtern cheeks, while slowly droops the greying head.

A look, 'akin to lasting peace, the smiling visage keeps—
"Next year" concerns him not at all. His rest has come — he's dead.

Instead of Fifty-Two

Said Farmer Jack to Neighbor Joe, in terms so melancholy, "My blo' is cold, I'm growing old—I'm fifty-two by golly! My smile is nil, my look is glum, my disposition's on the bum; a song I have no heart to hum—I'm everything but jolly. My pep has long deserted me: all gone is my aggression. I'm ever sad, I'm never glad—Oh, woe is my confession! I've forty aches in arms and leg, and shake like one cursed with theague; if times get worse soon I shall beg—account of this depression. I tell you, Joe, I'm mighty blue. I wish so much, oh, how I do, that I could be a boy again, instead of fifty-two!"

"Your system's wrong," friend Joe replied, "Your view on life is phoney. For such abuse there's no excuse — that guff is all baloney. Must anyone go mooning round, immersed in deepest gloom profound, with nose just barely off the ground, and glare of eye so stony? Reverse your program for a spell and try a bit of sinning; that mournful pan right now I'd can for one that's always grinning. Start off each morning with a laugh. Don't be afraid to joke or chaff; and cups of happiness you'll quaff each day from its beginning!"

"Forget your worries and your cares, your interest and your taxes. Don't turn the stone all day alone for other people's axes. Hang up your work and learn to play; soon you'll be singing everyday — like when the heart is young and gay, or when the mind relaxes. That old chin-whisker—scrape it off — it's to unsanitary! 'Twon't spoil your face in any case, I'll tell the world, by Jerry! Those hoary locks and fifty-odd that now have got you on the prod, won't ever put you 'neath the sod while you stay blithe and merry. Now listen, Jack, I'm telling you — take my advice and use it too—And you'll be like a boy again, instead of fifty-two!"

The Derelict

Decrepit frame, abandoned, old;
Recorder, mute, of history;
Would that your past you might
unfold,
Its unknown truths reveal to me.
Did once, in each dear treasured
room,
Where now but phantom mem'ries
hide;
Where dust and cobwebs spread
their gloom—
Did love and youth walk side by
side?
And might be then, when you were
young,
In wifely pride a woman sweet,
Unstinted, glad her praises sung
Of domicile so bright, so neat?
(And too, methinks I hear it now,
The prating, happy childish voice
That bids maternal fond eyes glow
A father's doting heart rejoice.)
Did want and gay prosperity
Come alternating through the
years;
Privation prove a joy to be.
Tho' not unmixed with sorrow's
tears?
Ah, strange indeed what thoughts
arise;
What fancied scenes this place
recalls!
Who knows what hopes, what
tragedies
Found birth amid these ageing
walls.
Save this old 'house? Nor will it
e'er
Such sacredness of trust betray
Tho' floor and gable pass repair
And sills and rafters meet decay.
Bide fast, old faithful, thine to
guard
Thy mysteries as yet untold;
They secrets too for aye unshared—
We but the pow'r to guess do
hold.

What a Pity!

There once was a billy (his name
I forget)
A funny old chap I recall;
On account of a weakness to worry
and fret,
Who wouldnt be happy at all.

Each day without fail this bird
could be found,
Even though all conditions were
fine,
In quest of old Trouble—just snoot-
ing around
And fixing his face for a whine.
He'd worry for fear of the sun
coming out
To burn up the pasture and
grain;
Then, "What's that darned weath-
erman thinking about?"
The minute it started to rain.
He'd grumble, and slander the day
he was born,
While rapping an ill-paying crop.
When prices were good for his
wheat and his corn
He'd opine they were due for a
drop.
The air, 'twas a fact, would some
day give out;
We'd perish for lack of its
breath;
Till at last for a topic to worry
about
He just naturally worried to
death.
So they put him down deep in a
far lonely plot
With a fifty-buck stone at his
head,
And its stingy inscription they
quickly forgot—
"He worried," was all that it said!

C.P.R. Builders

Indomitable hearts of yesterday,
Expanders of a system puny
born;
Be homage yours forever, since the
day
A nation from its wilderness was
torn.
That migrant hordes might follow
in your wake,
The mountains wild and prairies
bleak you dared;
Privation too, and hardship for our
sake,
Nor manhood's move in danger
ever spared.
Not yours the taunts of others then
to heed
As face to face with odds you
struggled on;
In obstacles laid low with valiant
deed

The metal's lasting temper ever shone.

The task, herculean, long at last complete;

In one, all Canada from coast to coast;

So wonderful accomplishment — a feat

Full many another well might yearn to boast.

Self-giving spartans, you who linked the rail —

Where now majestic iron monsters roll,

You drove the way, you pioneered the trail —

Not for a corporation, but a soul!

An Invalid's Request

Oh, take me out to the hills again,

Where the wolf and the coyote roam;

Where the mule deer guards its playful young,

And the woodchuck makes his home.

There the red-squirrel chatters defiance bold,

While the partridge drums his tune.

On the moss-grown log in a jungled nook,

Where the sun shines through at noon.

Ah! pitied to be is the grasping grind

Whom nature never calls,

And solace for all whose ills is found

Within four man-made walls.

For blinded indeed are the soulless eyes,

And dead the heart must be

To never have thrilled at the call of a bird

To his mate in the nesting-tree.

Then carry me back to the bonnie hills,

That there I may glimpse once more

The glories of His handiwork

Far off from the city's roar.

Where spruce and pine, and balm and birch,

All mingle to create

A scene to rival the artist's skill

In splendor, hue and state.

Keep Cheerful

'Tis a-plenty the world knows of struggle and strife;

Then why should we make any more?

If we'd laugh at the knocks in the battle of life,

We'd cheer many hearts that are sore.

And to many crusty old codgers right now,

Who like to make other folks blue —

They grumble and growl and kick up a row

At all that a fellow may do.

So I'm for the lad with a grin on his face.

When the world isn't using him well;

When the grouchers declare its a heck of a place

And everything going to hell.

And here's to the one who whistles a tune

'Neath the burden he's bearing alone;

But the man worth while is the one who can smile —

"Though hog-tied, roped and thrown.

The Other Side

Mother's Day is now behind us,

And we've all renewed our vow

To protect the dear old lady Till the end of time — and how!

Tho' we did but do her justice,

I maintain it's just too bad

That not one breath was sacrificed In lauding poor old Dad.

Of course the old boy's grouchy — Disposition's just a wreck;

Might be too he's getting stooped (From others riding on his neck).

No longer young and handsome;

Off his pep a bit I know;

And soon there'll be just desert Where the hair's supposed to grow.

Ah yes! he's sadly blemished,

But listen here my lad,

Don't ever let it stop you From boasting for your dad.

For his heart's not built of asphalt

Or the stuff they put in bricks;

You'll find it smoothly functioning,
And hitting on all six.

Don't forsake him, he's your daddy;
Faithful friend and somethin'
more
Though sorta stale and quiet,
He's still gamey to the core.

Hurry 'round and get his slippers
Like a duty-loving son—
The "Pioneer" and meerschaum,
When his trying day is done.

Make him feel that you're his
buddy
One-hundred-odd per cent;
'Twll plug him full of gratitude,
The dear old weary gent.

Then annex this gentle' minder,
With emphases a few,
When for Mother you petition:
"And, please God, the Old Man
too!"

Remember and Forget

'Tis well that we remember;
If so we cherish well
The things that make for happy
hearts
An dark forebodings quell.
Yet vaster far life's meaning:
The brighter view we'd get,
Could we but daily keep in mind
Our duty to forget.

Remember all the happiness—
Forget the racking pain
And bleeding heart. The parted
thread—
Just take it up again.
Waste not your time with sighing.
Nor daily round and fret;
Most wonderful of blessings
Is the power to forget.

The fleecy clouds and summer—
Remember them for aye;
December's chill is tempered
With memories of May.
Then banish from your horizon
Those ominous clouds of jet,
And brighten up with sunshine
That talent to forget.

Remember there's a future;
Forget the mournful past—
The petty slights and bruises—
Our griefs won't always last.
Keep bravely up the pathway,
E'en though with danger set;
Ah! sure there's joy a-plenty
In trying to forget!

Some Mothers Boy

Filled with the lust of the rover—
Sunshiny weather or rain;
Happy-go-lucky he 'rambles,
Riding the rods, of the train.

No fixed destination concerns him;
His transit companions, un-
known;
Some mother's boy is a wand'r'r
Out in the hard world alone.

Boarding a "box" while in motion
He swings just a second to late;
Mangled his form now is lying
Crushed by the wheels of the
fright.

Slowly his life's blood is leaving
Slowly the gravel turns red;
Softly, speak softly in whispers—
Some mother's darling is dead!

A place in the graveyard is waiting;
Go bury him there, and a tear
For the poor homeless hobo let
trickle—
And the mother who held him so
dear!

Quite So

Of all the men beneath the skies,
The farmer poet I most despise.
When he should be out making hay
He monkeys round the place all day
A-looking wise and chewing snuff,
While thinking up some crazy
stuff.

His smock is quite beyond repair,
There's chaff and thistle in his hair;
His whiskers are a sight to see—
Much like a rat's nest you'll agree.
The buttons from his shirt are
gone;
His socks—he hasn't any on!

Give me a rope, slungo'er a limb,
And soon I'd rid the world of him!
I'd put him where such wops as he
Would find congenial company.
There he and Nick could write a
pome

Entitled "Women Rules the Home",
Or, "How to Make Them Leg-orms
Lay"
Or, "Make the Darned Old Home-
stead Pay."
Or he might while away the time
Creating red-hot mushy rhyme.
But I must hike and raise some
pelf—
Y'see, I's one of 'em m'self!

Roving Romance

In reed canoe just built for two,
With Hula by my side—
A south seas gent on pleasure
bent—

I sailed Hawaii's tide.

Our bark so brave rides every
wave,

Each foamy crest and hollow,
To float at ease on limpid seas
Where trouble fears to follow.

Like far-off song from seraph
throng,

The zephyrs' gentle strumming;
While softly sweet, the music beat
In languid rapturous thrumming.

Thus, day by day, we while away
The minutes and the hours,
Or roam ashore like twain of yore
Thro' verdant Eden-bowers.

Br-r-r-r, what a change! Uncanny
—strange!

My teeth are all a-chatter!
With sinking heart I wake and
start—

Now what can be the matter?

No scented breeze sighs through
the trees—
Straight from the Pole 'tis blow-
ing.

It's broad daylight, the ground is
white;

All night has it been snowing.

Nor swarthy lass in gown of
grass—

The wires all are humming
At such a rate to imitate
The ukulele's drumming;

—Or so 'twould seem. Confounded
dream!

I scramble out of bed.
That south sea guy will have to
die—
I'm an Eskimo instead!

How About This?

When the 'hoppers and the hail
have taken toll of all your
crop,

And the sheriff's making threats
to throw you out upon your ear;
When your debts are mounting
skyward till you think they'll
never stop,

And your heart is heavy-laden
with despondency and fear—
It's kinda nice right then to have

a friendly fellow call
And try to cheer you up without
any show of fuss,—
Just to know he shares your
troubles, just a word or two—
that's all,

With perhaps a bit of banter, or
a sympathetic cuss.

When the gossips of the neighbor-
hood are working overtime
Spreading tales 'bout some poor
buddy which he's helpless to
deny;

While they seek to drag his
character beneath the dirt and
slime,

And his hungry heart grows cold
with not a friendly soul a-nigh—
Then a guy would greet him with
a smile

And a "put it there, old-timer!
I know—I understand."
'Twould set his heart to singing—
banish gloom for many a mile,
While along would come that
feeling—Oh, so glorious and grand!

When the grim and silent Messen-
ger takes from the humble
home

The rose-bud you so cherished—
how you grieve to see her go!
How sweet to have a neighbor in
the lonely hours come
And say, "I'm sorry, Tom, per-
haps there's something I could
do."

Once more will life seem bearable,
the gall less bitter be,
The dawn so long despaired of,
in the East will then appear;
A ray of hope and faith the reddened
eyes be made to see,
As you come to know the joy of
one true friend a-standing near.

In the country or the city, on the
farm and in the store,
There are lives that could be
brightened with a word of
hearty cheer;

And golden opportunities come
daily to our door
To help some burdened brother
on the upward way so drear.
If no wealth we have to offer, that
need never hold us back;

On the spirit of the giver much,
as ever, will depend;

And times are without number
when of sympathy we lack;
When the cares of life are press-
ing and some fellow needs a
friend.

When Jack Left Home

I mind it well—him standin' there;
so fine an' tall an' straight,
And us a-biddin' him good-bye
here by the ol' farm gate.
He was tired of the country—fig-
gered life out here was slow;
He'd a hank'r'n' for the city, so
of course I let him go.
And though gladly I'd a' given half
my life to have him stay,
I tried my best to hide it when
the laddie went away.
Poor mother she was feelin' bad;
her heart was breakin'—nigh;
The tears were coursin' down her
cheeks, but still she didn't cry,
But sister sobbed while in his arms,
and Bud he blubbered some;
An' me—my feelin's all was dead,
that day when Jack left home.
We never saw our boy again; at
first he'd write a line
'Bout every other day or so to
say that he was fine.
But soon his letters seemed t' drag
—not cheery like before;
They come that way for 'most a
year an' then we heard no
more.
An' still we kinda hoped along—
we couldn't jus' believe
That Jack'd leave us all for good
an' make our hearts t'grieve.
And every year at Christmas-time,
before his empty chair
We'd set an extra plate, and
sorta see him settin' thère,
While mother breathed a fervent
prayer her boy would cease to
roam
And come back lookin' like the
day he left his boyhood home.
Now mother's long been laid to rest;
she never seemed the same
Since Jackie started off that day
t' look for wealth an' fame.
And sister now is married—Lord,
how the time has flown!
And Bud has taken him a wife
an' farmin' on his own.
But I can still always think of Jack
like he was just a lad.
And figger soon he'll wander back
t' see his poor old dad.
So I keep lookin' down the lane —
my head jus' turns that way—
A-hopin' and a-thinkin' he'll re-
turn again some day.
An' I reckon that he'll find it so,
whenever that may come—
His old man waitin' at the gate
to welcome him back home.

Don't

When things go haywire out on
the farm,
Don't growl, old man, don't
growl;
And country life losses some of its
charm,
Don't spoil the day with a howl.
Swear if you must—although 'tis
wrong;
Better the laugh and the cheerful
song;
The tide will turn—it won't seem
long
If you whistle instead of growl.

If the eggs go bad 'neath the sit-
ting hen,
Don't storm, old lady, don't
storm;
Forget all about it and set her
again—
This time she'll keep them
warm.
Chicks are freakish, comical birds;
In flocks they travel—but never in
herds,
And can't be hatched from angry
words;
So take my advice—don't storm!

If some fine morning you lose
your job,
Don't whine, young man, don't
whine;
Fetch out the grin instead of the
sob—
Pretend that it suits you fine.
Tell the Old Man he can go to—
Then marry his daughter so pretty
and swell,
And start up in business against
him as well—
Men never were made to whine.

When some girl "friend" has stol-
en your beau,
Don't cry, little sweetie, don't
cry;
Just say, "Aw heck!" and let him
go—
Don't let it moisten your eyes;
Then step right out, with your
head held high,
Plug up the tears and muffle the
sigh,
And get you a better, handsomer
guy—
But please, oh! please don't cry!

The Hermit

Lives there a hint of knowledge vast,
That one should even hope to guess
What mystery-enshrouded past
Gave motive for this loneliness?
Why chose he solitude's domain—
Didst crave such mad, ironic bliss?
From woman's love would he refrain,
Or spurn soft infant's roguish kiss?
Or might be it, gay, trusting youth
Misled, betrayed did fall;
To learn too late the warning truth:
"Remorse frees not its thrall!"
Unfathomable sacrifice!—
O sordid, living hell!—
Deep in his breast the answer lies;
'Tis he alone could tell.
Obscure, unknown—thus day to day,
With men no more to roam—
Till silent, broken, bent and grey,
His face he turns to Home;
Till One who notes the sparrow's fall
Puts forth a hand to save;
And secret, sweet or 'kin to gall,
Goes with him to the grave!

His Place

Of Tennyson and Byron, too,
The works he did admire;
To eminence of fame like these
Vowed he to once aspire.
His heart to Emerson yearned
true,
Like any damsel fair;
And all the flowers at his com-
mand
He wreathed about Voltaire.
So rev'renced he the gifted bards
Of home and foreign soil,
Throughout the night to put in
verse
Their whims and ways would
toil.
• Till one blest hour a voice there
came
A-nigh his troubled bed,
"Strive not to imitate the past
Of vanished souls" it said.

"Be thou thyself, and give the world
What resteth at thy hand;
Nor scorn to phrase in simple rhyme
What all may understand!"
Soft came the dawn whilst morn-
ing 'woke,
The vision on had passed,
Yet pleased withal, the dreamer
smiled—
His niche he'd found at last!

To an Old Wagon

(On the author's farm can be seen the remains of a wagon, which, although more than sixty years old, is still in a fair state of preservation.)

As one whose toiling days are past,
Yet loathes surrender to decay;
E'en so, dear relic—now the last
Reminder of a by-gone day.

When venturous spirits, holding
true—
Brave, loyal wives and fearless
men
A-pioneering came—and you
The mode of transportation then.

Full sixty years you've felt the
strain
Of burdens uncomplaining borne.
Thrice twenty years! Time, sun and
rain
Away all trace of youth have
worn;

Till now (sad thought) 'tis meet
you must
Submit to age and modern sway;
Let fello' rot and tire rust—
Both car and truck are here to
stay.

No more the trails your wheels
shall roam,
Nor creak of axle echo near;
For aged warrior peace and home—
Be yours to bide life's evening
here.

Sleep on, old timer; rest and dream;
Thy work be done, thy rest well-
earned.
In thinking backward doth it seem
Much good from thee might we
have learned!

Next Year

"Next year," the weather-prophets say, "will be all we desire; And bumper crops we're sure to reap if well the soil we till." ("Tis twilight-time as, pipe aglow, he settles by the fire, And with the smoke his spirits rise while all around grows still.)

"Next year the sun and rain combined will furnish what we need To make all vegetation thrive and yield profusely too; 'Twill cause the grass to luscious grow, and propagate our seed A hundred-fold. Oh! glad we'll be to have it all come true.

"The cattle on the verdant hills a-growing fat will be, The wheat put up a record fit to make a fellow cheer; And naught but optimism gay shall anyone e'er see— Methinks more bins I'll need to build at threshing-time next year.

"Next year," so politicians say, "we'll all see better times; And produce prices will advance so we can take our ease, And with our wives and families resort to warmer climes— There to escape the wintry blasts 'neath orange-laden trees.

"Oh! sure I'll pay the mortgage off—a trifling thing to do; I'll paint the buildings, fix the house and buy a brand new car.

That note against me at the bank, I'll lift and tear in two; A single blot must not remain our happiness to mar

"Like heaven itself this earth will be when all this comes to pass, And I can say good-bye to care; (the time seems drawing near!) No fear of bleak despondency—no black and deep morass.

Oh, happy I can rest . . . and rest . . . Next year . . . next year!"

The pipe slips from a nerveless grasp; a snowy pallor creeps Into the leathern cheeks, while slowly droops the greying head.

A look akin to lasting peace the

smiling visage keeps; "Next year" concerns him not at all. His rest has come—he's dead!

Dreams

With hope we dream of the future— We sigh and dream of the past; Of bright day-dreams are lives composed,

And troubled ones a few. And dreams there be as summer skies,

With ne'er a cloud o'ercast— But sweetest and best it seemeth to me Are the dreams that never come true.

Then why must the heart grow heavy;

The spirit revert to gall? One still may revel in fancy And keep his star in view. Since God in His fatherly mercy Bequeaths to each and all, To comfort the troubled longing soul,

The dreams that never come true.

Twilight Memories

When the twilight softly deepens And day has gone to rest, How memories come stealing back To set our hearts aglow! Then care and trouble flit away As tho' with wings possess'd— And a quiet peace the dusk pervades, So good for us to know.

Thus we dream away the gloaming While the worries and the strife, The heartaches and anxieties Which haunt grim daylight hours,

Are forgotten for the moment In the nobler thoughts of life— As we linger in the past, 'Mid sweet enchanted bowers.

Then a passing glimpse of heaven And its portals' gleaming gold, Brings the beck and smile of angels From that land so pure and blest; Whilst, within, is born a yearning Dear, lost loved ones hands to hold— When Death's night the soul releases To ascend to perfect rest.

Our Railroads

Ere roused the West from slumber,
While the East was still at morn;
Of fertile minds, far-seeing too,
Their infant lives were born.
Immune to ridicule and scorn,
Unmindful of the strife;
Threw they apace and in their strength
A nation charged to life.
Till now long; countless gleaming miles
That serve from day to day,
Attribute to the daring skill
When Spartan grit held sway;

When stalwarts' roar a challenge flung
The valleys, hills and plains—
But echoes of that strenuous past,
The rumble of their trains.
The faith-inspiring moguls roll;
The safe, luxurious car;
A peerless transportation vaunt,
And justly proud we are.
Here's to these sturdy aids of ours;
All hail, their workers too.
With allies such, 'tis but to win—
We'll grin and struggle through!

The Bachelor's Lament

Oh! for the smile of a woman sweet
When the long day's work is done,
And the patter of happy children's feet
As to welcome me they run.
Oh! for the joy of a baby's arms
Around my neck entwined;
Then the cares of the day, and the tempter's charms
Would vanish far behind,

Yes, give me a' child and a sov'ng wife
And ne'er would I wish to roam—
I'd dwell, forgetful of earthly strife,
In a place called "Home, Sweet Home."
For a father's heart holds a father's love—

Its fires within do burn,
And oft that its throbs are echoed above
Full many have yet to learn.
And many a hope it may cherish,
And many an ache live there,
And the fond sweet dreams that may perish
For the ones that are placed in his care.
So, give him a home where there's earthly bliss,
And loved ones to adore,
And gladden his heart with a love-warm kiss—
Of the world he'll ask nothing more!

The Cow-Mother

No sustenance north, south, nor west nor east;
All-pitiless the arid, withering sands—
Pathetic phantom of a living beast,
Beside the dried-up water-hole she stands.
Protruding bones, parched throat and swollen tongue—
A frame-work only to a shrivelled hide;
Around in sinister array are strung
The belated forms of others where they died.

Ironically, as though to thwart the law
That life be transmitted through the dead,
One last sweet drop her offspring fain would draw
While she, gaunt, hollow-eyed with drooping head
The end awaits. Yet does not there a gleam
In those dim, glazing orbs a hint betray
Of deathless love? Unconquered still 'twould seem—
A mute comparison to swift decay.

Brave, noble creature; none shall fully know
The sufferings of your kind on range far-flung,
From drought and heat, through cold, and winter's snow—
Staunch heroes, yes and martyrs too, unsung!.

Book Travel

In dreamy transport far from home,
My rover-lust gone free,
From Russia's chilling steppes I
roam To torrid Borneo's Sea.

On south sea isle's romantic beach
I catch the playful surf;
Australian shores by magic reach;
Press Argentina's turf.

And peoples, too, of every land
Ope wide to me their doors;
Of lofty peer I touch the hand;
'Mong sombre Scottish moors.

The cotters' friendly "drappie"
share.

I greet the war-like Turk,
Or meet with Zulu savage there
Where threatened dangers lurk.

Blest be the man, thrice blessed he,
Who all to furture lore,
Of works pertained to land and
sea

Bequeaths not scanty store.

Prince noble, thou! where e'er the
wind

Its wayward course mayst blow,
From priceless pages of thy mind
The world shall learn and know.

What matter tho' the grave-ward
way

Thy mortal frame hath gone,
Deep in the hearts of men today
Thy trusting soul lives on!

Mother's Pancakes

With Old Fancy in the gloamin',
When grim day has made its
goal,
Hand in hand I go a-roamin'
On a peaceful twilight stroll.

Happily along we ramble
Down the path of Worry Free;
Leaving worldly strife an' scramble
In the place they'd ought to be.

Till I'm peepin' in a kitchen
Thro' the dim lamp-lighted pane,
And I find my thoughts a-swatchin'
Back to other days again.

All to once I'm seein' plainer;
Chair an' table come to view;
Stove an' kettle, bucket, strainer,
Clock and cherry mantle too.

And look, there above the fire—
No, I'm dreamin' not at-all—

That old iron pan-cake frier
In its place again' the wall:

Then does memory come streakin'—
Like, somehow, I knew she
would—
An' from out the past she's speakin'
Of a mother kind and good.

From the batter-bowl beside her
With her drippin' spoon I see
She's a-feedin' of that spider
Creamy hot-cakes-soon-to-be.

Once again I'm just a shaver,
All excitement and a-glow;
Watchin' with delight an' favor
Them divine creations grow.

Mounties Forever

Are we to see you go, men
(For shame, such foul abuse!)
When motives only false are flaunt,
Or prejudiced excuse?

Long, long ago you braved the
test,

When all the West was raw,
So men respected, men obeyed
The scarlet-tunic law.

'Twas then you earned the "force"
renown;

Tho' loath alway to kill,
Upheld the country's honor true—
Are you not worthy still?

The redskin loved your peaceful
mien,

The bad-man feared your vow;
You were our friends in days gone
by—

Must we desert you now?

Ten thousand voices answer "No,
We'll not forsake you, men;
A nobler justice shall betide,
A saner judgement then

When from our midst we've
bounced for aye
That despot, Old S.C.
And bade our Hitler 'lively step'—
'Bidefast R.C.M.P.!"

Departed

Out on the prairie bare and brown
Where the stars their vigil keep,
His life's work o'er, he laid him
down

And quietly fell asleep.

To that "great beyond" his spirit

flew,
Where a place is set aside
For tired horses—and ponies too,
Who in loving service have died.
Where pastures are ever fresh and
green
With streams of water by,
And naught but good is ever seen
Beneath the azure sky;
Where barns are always filled with
hay,
And oats tied up in bags,
Dear Dobbin is spending the time
at play
With other faithful nags.

'Tis there he will rest through
eternity;
Yes, there he can take his fill
Of Eternal bliss—like you and me,
If we do the Master's will.

The Cowboy's Hymn

Nary light was on the prairie, nary
star lit up the sky,
As we rode the tricky night-herd,
my old side-kick Bill and I.
And we sang t' keep 'em easy, tho'
the songs they wa'n't the kind
That you'd calc'lat'ed tickle any pi-
ous-thinkin' mind.
But at last the brutes fed tranquil,
all the herd had weary grown;
Slow an' gentle then we circled till
the dogies bedded down.

Gives a queer sensation, buddy, to
be out thar' nigh alone,
With critturs' lowing silent an' the
coyote howlin' gone,
Then you get t' cogitatin' on a life
that might've been;
An' y' wish you'd never pardnered
with a single trait of sin.
And you tinker with yer conscience,
and some swell resolves y'
make

For t' hit the trail of virtue which,
when daylight comes, you
break.
So I rolled a smoke fer comp'ny,
stopped my cayuse, made a
light;
That old cinch was loose a-workin'-
I reached down and made 'er
tight.
Bye'n bye—or am I dreamin'? (I'd
been drowsin' some I know)
From across that field of cattle
comes a tune of long ago.
Tho' the words is some'at blurry,
with the night I reckon, still

They's the same I'd learned in
childhood, and the singer's
name is Bill.

And my heart starts actin' funny
an' my throat feels sorta tight
As I ponder on that puncher and
his song, Lead kindly Light.
In that tenor voice o' his'n he be-
moans th' "encirclin' gloom,"
For the night he 'lows is darksome
and he shore is "far from
home."
"Keep thou my feet"—(by Jerry,
that ol' mav'rick's locoed queer,
Wantin' God should trail him pron-
to, does he wander far 'r near!)

After whiles the song dies sudden
tho' I still set dreamin' thar'
In the saddle, whilst around me all
the world has shed it's care.
Then a rough hand grips my chapp-
leg and a word is uttered low—
Dear ol' Bill he's thar' a-waiting', so
I rouse and with 'im go,
For the dawn by now is stirrin'
whilst the dew is lyin' damp;
Soon a-patterin' come the day-shift,
and we two ride back t' camp.

Often yet when twilight settles do
I see as through a haze
Those same rollin' prairie ranges
like in them dear by-gone days.
An' the steers I know is grazing as
we herd 'em in the night;
And a lonely cow-boy's singin'
through his soul, "Lead Kindly
Light."
And altho' it's only fancy, with my
thoughts far-off an' gone,
My old heart jus' seems t' echo:
" . . . kindly light . . . lead thou
me on!"

St. Peter and Politics

When my work down here is fin-
ished, and I climb the golden
stair,
And meet Saint Peter at the Gate,
he'll say, "Well, I dee-clare!"
Then he'll slap me on the shoulder
and say, "Well, well by gum!
If here ain't old John Whittlestick!
Where on earth did you come
from?
I'm mighty glad to see you, ~~man~~, ^{man}
but you can't tarry here;
The place for you is 'down below'
—for reasons all too clear.

Five Little Christmas Stockings

Your morals they are none too good; your vices they are many; Your virtues are so few — in fact, I doubt if you have any. And one thing more—just let me say, I must obey the rule To not let any guy in here that ever skinned a mule.

Please don't commence an argument, for this I know too well— In spite of all that you may say, you'll have to go to hell."

"Oh, let me in, dear Peter; please take me in," I'll say; For I came here from Didsbury, and walked the whole d—d way. I'm footsore, worn and hungry; take pity on me, Pete, That I may share this happy home where there's enough to eat. I know I've been a sinful cuss while roaming through the earth; Fair women were my weakness then; of them there was no dearth. But I have never idle been, for always did I work To earn my measly grub each day, and never did I shirk.

"But what with crops and prices poor, the way was hard and tough— So if you'll pardon me, I'll say that I've had hell enough; I'm tired of working overtime, so take me in, I pray, And show me to an easy job to while the time away. Then furnish me with snowy wings, that I may learn to fly And soar just like a chicken-hawk, up in yon heavenly sky. And let me have a harp of gold, so I can play and sing, Till some day, getting low in cash, I hock the blessed thing. Now, if you'll do this much for me, and all these other bums, We'll vote you into power again when next election comes."

"Well said, thou faithful hayseed! I'll do my best," says Pete; "But please come in the back door way, and clean the barnyard off your feet."

The bells are ringing gaily to Christmas anthems sung; 'Tis "Peace on earth, good will" once more, and hearts again are young. It minds me so of other days and other Christmas Eves, When other souls were in our midst to share our joys and griefs, When here within these very walls, now sombre, grim and still, Glad, happy childish voices the joyous hours would fill. For I'm living in the past tonight, and I see by the fire's dull glow The place where five little stockings hang sweetly in a row.

Our Billy boy was a lively son, while Jack was a quiet lad, But they both hung their stockings there to be filled by Mother and Dad; And Betty and Dotty left theirs too, hoping for trinket and doll. And last came tiny wee Mary's sock; the cutest of them all. So when the kiddies were safe in bed, dreaming of Old Saint Nick, And the treasures that would soon be theirs, all through a magic trick, We'd steal so softly through the gloom and fill with loving care The five little Christmas stockings hanging beneath the stair.

Gone are the days that used to be; the little birds have flown; They've left the home-nest one by one till I am all but alone. And I cry out in my loneliness — Oh, why should life thus be, Why do our loved one's leave us? Lord, help us the reason to see. For my heart is filled with an aching void, and I see by the fires' soft glow A picture of five Christmas stockings a-hanging in a row.